

Amendments To The Claims

Please cancel Claims 40-47, 73-77 and 85-89 without prejudice. The following list of the claims replaces all prior versions and lists of the claims in this application.

Claims 1-89 (Canceled).

90. (New) An apparatus comprising a control server that centrally manages configurations for a plurality of other devices, said control server including:
a first interface through which said control server can communicate with other devices;
a storage portion that stores a plurality of device configurations corresponding to respective devices other than said control server;
a second interface through which a user can present a request for an alteration to a selected one of said device configurations; and
a further portion that responds to receipt of a user request through said second interface by transmitting through said first interface a job for updating a device associated with said selected device configuration, that subsequently receives updated configuration information through said first interface, and that updates said selected device configuration in said storage portion based on said updated configuration information.

91. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 90, wherein said device configurations in said storage portion are configured in a hierarchical format.

92. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 90, including:
a control point separate from said control server and coupled to said first interface thereof; and

a plurality of devices that are separate from said control point and said control server, that are each coupled to said control point, and that each contain configuration information defining a respective configuration, said storage portion including a group of said device configurations equal in number to the number of said devices, and said device configurations in said group each including a copy of said configuration information from a respective one of said devices.

93. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 92, wherein said devices are each physically remote from said control point and from said control server, wherein said devices are coupled to said control point through a network; and wherein said control point is coupled to said control server through a network.

94. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 92, wherein said control point responds to receipt from said control server through said first interface of a job for updating a selected one of said devices by communicating with said selected device in a native protocol thereof to update said configuration information in said selected device as specified in the job, by thereafter communicating with said selected device in the native protocol thereof to read the updated configuration information therefrom, and by thereafter supplying the updated configuration information from said selected device to said control server through said first interface.

95. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 94,
wherein said devices include first and second devices that respectively have first and second native protocols that are different;
wherein when said selected device is said first device a first portion of said control point is responsive to the job for generating commands in said first protocol for said first device to carry out the configuration update defined in the job for said first device; and

wherein when said selected device is said second device a second portion of said control point is responsive to the job for generating commands in said second protocol for said second device to carry out the configuration update defined in the job for said second device.

96. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 92, wherein said device configurations in said group each include a history of configuration changes for the corresponding one of said devices.

97. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 90, including:

first and second control points that are each separate from said control server and that are each coupled to said first interface;

a plurality of first devices that are separate from said control points and said control server, that are each coupled to said first control point, and that each contain configuration information defining a respective configuration; and

a plurality of second devices that are separate from said control points, said control server and said first devices, that are each coupled to said second control point, and that each contain configuration information defining a respective configuration;

wherein said storage portion includes a first group of said device configurations equal in number to the number of said first devices, and includes a second group of said device configurations different from said first group and equal in number to the number of said second devices, said device configurations in said first group each including a copy of said configuration information from a respective one of said first devices, and said device configurations in said second group each including a copy of said configuration information from a respective one of said second devices.

98. (New) An apparatus according to Claim 97,

wherein said first control point responds to receipt from said control server through said first interface of a job for updating a selected one of said first devices by communicating with said selected first device in a native protocol thereof to update said configuration information in said selected first device as specified in the job, by thereafter communicating with said selected first device in the native protocol thereof to read the updated configuration information therefrom, and by thereafter supplying the updated configuration information from said selected first device to said control server through said first interface; and

wherein said second control point responds to receipt from said control server through said first interface of a job for updating a selected one of said second devices by communicating with said selected second device in a native protocol thereof to update said configuration information in said selected second device as specified in the job, by thereafter communicating with said selected second device in the native protocol thereof to read the updated configuration information therefrom, and by thereafter supplying the updated configuration information from said selected second device to said control server through said first interface.

99. A method comprising using a control server to centrally manage configurations for a plurality of other devices, including:

storing in a storage portion of said control server a plurality of device configurations corresponding to respective devices other than said control server;

accepting in said control server a request from a user for an alteration to a selected one of said device configurations; and

responding to receipt of the request by transmitting through an interface a job for updating a device associated with said selected device configuration, subsequently receiving updated configuration information through said interface, and then updating said selected device configuration in said storage portion based on said updated configuration information.

100. (New) A method according to Claim 99, including organizing said device configurations in said storage portion in a hierarchical format.

101. (New) A method according to Claim 99, including:
coupling to said interface a control point that is separate from said control server;
coupling to said control point a plurality of devices that are separate from said control point and said control server, and that each contain configuration information defining a respective configuration;
configuring said device configurations in said storage portion to include a group of said device configurations equal in number to the number of said devices; and
causing said device configurations in said group to each include a copy of said configuration information from a respective one of said devices.

102. (New) A method according to Claim 101, including causing said control point to respond to receipt from said control server through said interface of a job for updating a selected one of said devices by:

communicating with said selected device in a native protocol thereof to update said configuration information in said selected device as specified in the job;
thereafter communicating with said selected device in the native protocol thereof to read the updated configuration information therefrom; and
thereafter supplying the updated configuration information from said selected device to said control server through said interface.

103. (New) A method according to Claim 102,
wherein said devices include first and second devices that respectively have first and second native protocols that are different;

including causing said control point, when said selected device is said first device, to respond to the job by generating commands in said first protocol for said first device to carry out the configuration update defined in the job for said first device; and

including causing said control point, when said selected device is said second device, to respond to the job by generating commands in said second protocol for said second device to carry out the configuration update defined in the job for said second device.

104. (New) A method according to Claim 101, including configuring said device configurations in said group to each include a history of configuration changes for the corresponding one of said devices.